

REMARKS

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-14 are pending. Claims 1-14 are amended. Claims 1 and 8 are independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the objections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

Objections Based on 37 CFR § 1.121(c)

The Examiner alleges that the reply filed on April 30, 2004 is not fully responsive the Office Action of October 15, 2003 because the amendments to the claims and to the drawings are not in strict compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(c).

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's objections, but merely to advance prosecution of the present application, each of claims 1, 6, 13 is amended herein to address each of the issues pointed out by the Examiner.

In view of the above-described changes, independent claims 1 and 8 are in condition for allowance. Further, dependent claims 2-7 and 2-7 and 9-14 are in condition for allowance due to their dependence on allowable independent claims, of due to the additional novel features set forth therein.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections under 37 CFR 1.121(c) are respectfully requested. All claims of the present application are in condition for allowance.

Application No. 10/024,560
Amendment dated March 21, 2005
Reply to Office Action of February 25, 2005

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CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

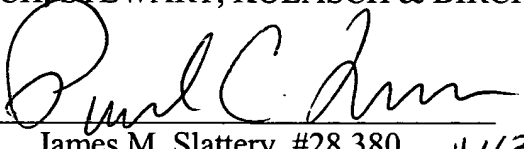
If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, she is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 205-8000. (Direct Line 703-208-4030)

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

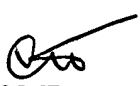
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